

Message Text

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P R 192246Z DEC 75
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL MEDELLIN
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E.O. 11652 NA

TAGS: BEXP, CO

SUBJECT: LASED/NEW DETROIT (MICHIGAN) IOGA TRADE
--- MISSION, NOV. 2-17, 1975

REF: BOGOTA 8158; MEDELLIN 0320

1. USDOC APPRECIATES INDEPTH POST REPORTING ON SUBJECT
TRADE MISSION CONTAINED REFTELS. THE INORDINATE AMOUNT
OF TIME AND EFFORT EXPENDED BY BOTH POSTS AND COMMERCE TO
ASSIST THIS GROUP OF SMALL TO MEDIUM SIZE FIRMS, REPRESENTING
A SEGMENT OF THE MACHINE TOOL INDUSTRY OF THE
STATE OF MICHIGAN, APPARENTLY HAS PROVEN MOST WORTHWHILE.
PRELIMINARY REPORTS RECEIVED FROM THE MISSION MEMBERS TO
DATE INDICATE THAT EACH WAS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL, INDEED,
OVERWHELMED BY THE SUPPORT RECEIVED AT EACH POST,
PARTICULARLY THE LEVEL OF CONTACTS MADE ON THEIR BEHALF,
AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, BY THE DIRECT AND PROJECTED SALES
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RESULTS OF APPROXIMATELY US DOLS 3 MILLION ACHIEVED BY

THE MISSION.

2. THE SUGGESTIONS MADE BY BOTH AMEMBASSY BOGOTA AND AMCON MEDELLIN PARALLELED THOSE OF COMMERCE OFFICERS WHO WORKED CLOSELY WITH THE ORGANIZERS IN THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF THE MISSION.

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MESSRS. RIOS AND LAMBRINOS, IN THEIR ZEAL TO LEAVE NO

STONE UNTURNED TO MAKE THIS, THE FIRST MAINLAND U.S. MINORITY-ORGANIZED TRADE MISSION (COMMONWEALTH OF PUERTO RICO ORGANIZES A NUMBER OF MISSIONS EACH YEAR) ADMITTEDLY MADE MISTAKES; FOR EXAMPLE: (1) WHILE COMMERCE MAINTAINED CONTROL OF THE SHIPMENT OF THE MISSION MEMBERS' CATALOGS FROM WASHINGTON VIA APO TO BOGOTA (SHIPPED OCT 3), TWO OF THE FIRMS WERE LATE WITH THEIR CATALOGS AND WERE INSTRUCTED TO SHIP DIRECTLY FROM DETROIT VIA APO, WHICH THEY DID ON OCT 8. THESE LATE CATALOGS WENT ASTRAY AND WERE NOT AVAILABLE TO THE POST FOR PRE-MISSION ACTIVITIES: (2) THEY ENGAGED A TRAVEL AGENT TO HANDLE THEIR HOTEL AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS RATHER THAN TO HANDLE THESE FUNCTIONS THEMSELVES OR TO REQUEST HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS THROUGH COMMERCE/STATE CHANNELS. TO HOLD COSTS OF MISSION PARTICIPATION TO A MINIMUM FOR THE MEMBER FIRMS, THE TRAVEL AGENT OFFERED THE MISSION MEMBERS A TOUR RATE WITH THE IDEA THAT THEY WOULD BE COMBINED WITH A LARGER GROUP FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES ONLY. WHEN COMMERCE LEARNED OF THESE ARRANGEMENTS VERY LATE IN THE SCHEDULE, THE ORGANIZERS WERE INFORMED THAT THIS LARGE GROUP DID NOT MEET IOGA CRITERIA. THEY RESPONDED WITH ASSURANCES THAT THE MISSION WOULD DISENGAGE ITSELF FROM THE TOUR UPON ARRIVAL IN BOGOTA AND STATED THAT THE TOUR GROUP HAD NOT BEEN INTENDED TO BE PART OF THE OFFICIAL MISSION ACTIVITIES IN BOGOTA AND MEDELLIN AND WOULD IN NO WAY INTERFERE WITH MISSION OPERATIONS. SINCE THIS TYPE OF ARRANGEMENT HAD BEEN UTILIZED IN THE PAST BY PREVIOUS MISSIONS, ALTHOUGH NOT IDEAL, IT WAS AGREED TO ALLOW THE MISSION TO CONTINUE WITH THESE PLANS WITH THE ASSURANCE THE TWO GROUPS WOULD NOT CONFLICT WITH EACH

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OTHER. HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS WERE INDEED HANDLED BY THE TRAVEL AGENT AND COMMERCE INFORMED THE POSTS OF THIS FACT WELL AHEAD OF THE MISSION'S ARRIVAL (REF USDOC 15306, 10/6/75); (3) THE ORGANIZERS HAD THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PREPARING AND ARRANGING FOR THE PRINTING OF THE MISSION BROCHURE, AS IS NORMAL PRACTICE WITH IOGAS. COMMERCE PROVIDED THE USUAL SAMPLES OF HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND TECHNIQUES USED BY OTHER IOGA MISSIONS TO PROMOTE THEIR

PRODUCTS OR SERVICES. AS WITH OTHER IOGAS, THE ORGANIZERS PREPARED THE TEXT, SELECTED THE PRINTER (IN THIS INSTANCE DECIDED TO PRINT LOCALLY IN DETROIT, UTILIZING SERVICES OF MINORITY-OWNED (LATIN) PRINTING FIRM AND DECIDED ON THE LARGER SIZE BROCHURE WITH BIOS OF INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS; AND (4) THE IMPORTANCE OF LOOKING TO ADDRESSEE POSTS AS MAJOR POINTS OF CONTACT WAS STRESSED BY COMMERCE THROUGHOUT ENTIRE CONTACT WITH ORGANIZERS. ORGANIZERS HAD NO ULTERIOR MOTIVES AS THEY PURSUED THEIR OWN CONTACTS IN

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COLOMBIA. THEY GENUINELY BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE DOING THEIR BEST FOR THE MISSION IN ATTEMPTING TO IDENTIFY CONTACTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP APPOINTMENTS AND ARRANGING FOR MEETINGS, AND BY ATTEMPTING TO UTILIZE LOCAL COLOMBIANS RECOMMENDED BY COLOMBIAN CONSUL IN DETROIT, AS SECRETARIES AND INTERPRETERS. THEY APPARENTLY DID NOT COMPREHEND THE FULL SCOPE AND OUTSTANDING QUALITY OF THE SUPPORT THAT THEY WERE TO RECEIVE FROM THE U.S. FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS IN BOGOTA AND MEDELLIN. HOWEVER, COMMERCE INSISTED THAT THE ORGANIZERS DESIST WITH THIS ACTIVITY AS SOON AS THEIR ACTIONS BECAME KNOWN.

3. REGARDING POST'S SUGGESTIONS OF THE ADVISABILITY OF AVOIDING HOLIDAY PERIODS, IT IS NOTED THAT THE DATES FOR THIS MISSION WERE RECOMMENDED BY EMBASSY BOGOTA, REFTEL BOGOTA 8158, WHICH STATED: "POST RECOMMENDS NOV 2-15 FOR MISSION. DECEMBER IS THE MAIL HOLIDAY MONTH IN COLOMBIA AND A DIFFICULT TIME FOR DOING BUSINESS. NOVEMBER 11 IS A COLOMBIAN NATIONAL HOLIDAY, BUT SCHEDULE CAN BE ARRANGED ACCORDINGLY."

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4. COMMERCE CHOSE TO PROVIDE AN ADVANCE OFFICER FOR TEN WORKING DAYS WITH FLEXIBILITY OF DIVIDING TIME BETWEEN BOGOTA AND MEDELLIN AS THAT OFFICER DEEMED NECESSARY AND APPROPRIATE, RE-CONFIRMING HOTEL/LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS, WORKING WITH POSTS TO MAKE KEY CALLS ON GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY FOR THE PURPOSE OF GENERATING ADVANCE PUBLICITY AND APPOINTMENTS FOR THE TRADE MISSION. THE COMMERCE ADVANCE OFFICER FELT THAT HER TIME WAS WELL UTILIZED.

5. WITH REGARD TO TOKEN PRESENTATIONS TO LOCAL DIGNITARIES, THESE ARE OFTEN A PART OF TRADE MISSION ACTIVITY, INCLUDING U.S. SPECIALIZED TRADE MISSIONS, WHEN IT IS BELIEVED THAT AN INCREASED AURA OF GOODWILL WOULD FOSTER TRADE, SUCH AS THIS GROUP FELT. SUCH PRESENTATIONS ARE USUALLY A FUNCTION OF PROTOCOL ASSIGNED TO THE MISSION

LEADERS, AS IN THIS CASE, AND DOES NOT DETRACT FROM THE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS OF THE MISSION MEMBERS. POSTS ASSIST-

ANCE IN THIS TYPE OF ACTIVITY IS ALWAYS GREATLY APPRECIATED. WITH REGARD TO SPECIALIZED TRADE MISSIONS, ON NUMEROUS OCCASIONS THE MISSION DIRECTORS HAVE MADE PRESENTATIONS OF THE IMPRESSIVE "U.S. PEACE AND COMMERCE MEDALS", WHICH ARE PURCHASED BY THE MISSION MEMBERS FROM THE U.S. TREASURY DEPARTMENT.

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6. WHILE IT IS APPARENT THAT THESE MINORITY SMALL BUSINESSMEN WERE INEXPERIENCED IN U.S. GOVERNMENT ACTIVITIES ABROAD AND IN THE OPERATION OF A FORMAL TRADE MISSION, ADDRESSEE POSTS ARE COMMENDED FOR THEIR PATIENCE, GUIDANCE AND EXCELLENT SUPPORT WHICH THEY GAVE TO THIS MISSION.

7. MESSRS. RIOS AND LAMBRINOS HAVE BOTH STATED THAT THEY HAVE LEARNED A GREAT DEAL FROM THIS EXPERIENCE AND WERE FORTUNATE TO HAVE HAD THE DEDICATED SUPPORT WHICH MADE THEIR MISSION A RESOUNDING SUCCESS. THEY ARE ALREADY MAKING PLANS FOR A SECOND MISSION TO ANOTHER AREA OF LATIN AMERICA AND HAVE PLEDGED ASSURANCE TO HEED THE GOOD ADVICE THEY HAVE RECEIVED FROM HOST POSTS AND FROM COMMERCE.

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8. THE TRADE MISSION MEMBERS MET WITH RIOS AND LAMBRINOS ON FRIDAY AM, DECEMBER 5, TO DISCUSS THEIR FOLLOW

UP ACTIVITIES. AT THAT MEETING, POSTS WILL BE INTERESTED TO NOTE, THAT COMMERCE WAS INFORMED THAT AT LEAST THREE OF THE MISSION PARTICIPANTS HAVE EXPRESSED STRONG INTEREST IN THE POSSIBILITY OF PARTICIPATING IN THE UP-COMING BOGOTA INTERNATIONAL FAIR. KISSINGER

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